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Discord: A Powerful Collaborative Platform for TBL Face2Face, Online, and Blended Learning

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Recommended Citation

Nazar, Ahmad; Thayib, Theodore; and Selim, Mohamed Y., "Discord: A Powerful Collaborative Platform for TBL Face2Face, Online, and Blended Learning" (2021). *Electrical and Computer Engineering Conference Papers, Posters and Presentations*. 181.

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Discord: A Powerful Collaborative Platform for TBL Face2Face, Online, and Blended Learning

Abstract

This work describes our current effort to use the Discord platform to overcome the new challenges that were added to our TBL classroom from the very beginning of the current pandemic. Some of these challenges are; 1) the enforced social distance in the classroom which prevents students from interacting during class time 2) the presence of face masks which make the communication between the instructor and the students not clear especially in large classes, and 3) the hybrid delivery of some courses where some students are in class and others are online. By utilizing Discord's features, including using Discord Bots, the course instructor can actively manage the teams' interactions, keep track of who is/isn't participating, take attendance, and even send messages to a specific team or even a specific student within a team.

Disciplines

Educational Methods | Educational Technology

Comments

This poster is published as Nazar, Ahmad, Theodore Thayib, and Mohamed Selim. "Discord: A Powerful Collaborative Platform for TBL Face2Face, Online, and Blended Learning." Presented at the 20th Annual Meeting of the Team-Based Learning Collaborative, March 3-5, 2021. Posted with permission.

Discord: A Powerful Collaborative Platform for TBL Face2Face, Online, and Blended Learning

A solution to the issues resulted from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Abstract:

This work describes our current effort to use the Discord platform to overcome the new challenges that were added to our TBL classroom from the very beginning of the current pandemic. Some of these challenges are: 1) the enforced social distance in the classroom which prevents students from interacting during class time 2) the presence of face masks which make the communication between the instructor and the students not clear especially in large classes, and 3) the hybrid delivery of some courses where some students are in class and others are online. By utilizing Discord's features, including using Discord Bots, the course instructor can actively manage the teams' interactions, keep track of who is/isn't participating, take attendance, and even send messages to a specific team or even a specific student within a team.

Description:

The discord server, which acts as a virtual learning environment, can be used to create virtual channels for each team that is needed for TBL activities, and within these channels, team members can communicate using text or voice. Also, the instructor and/or the TAs can observe how well teams are keeping on task, and most importantly, the level of participation. A goal of using Discord is to introduce a user-friendly tool that instructors can use to moderate group interactions and hold students accountable for their level of participation within their groups.

Results:

Based on a conducted survey, around 93% of the students indicated that they would like that all their future courses adapt Discord as an online learning environment. Moreover, 89% of the students showed a preference for using Discord over other well-known platforms such as Slack, Zoom and Webex

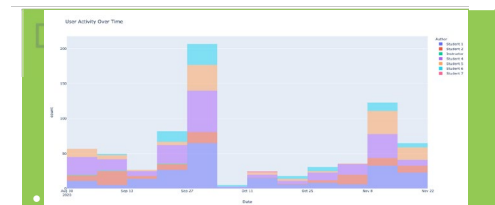
Which of the following applications would you like your next online class to use?

Discord	83 respondents	89 %
Zoom	5 respondents	5 %
Webex	1 respondent	1 %
Slack	2 respondents	2 %
Microsoft Teams	1 respondent	1 %
Google Classroom		0 %
GoToTeams		0 %
Other Technologies	1 respondent	1 %

How would you rate Discord as an online learning environment to be used in classes?

1 (very negative)	1 respondent	1 %
2 (negative)	1 respondent	1 %
3 (neutral)	4 respondents	4 %
4 (positive)	41 respondents	44 %
5 (very positive)	46 respondents	49 %

The overall change in team skills



Data Analysis

- If a student is not contributing to his/her team the instructor can observe that from the team's channel statistics
- Students are contributing differently to their team channel
- Some students are leading their team meetings by calling for a meeting in the Discord text channel

Discord Server Setup

At the Beginning of
The Semester

Virtual Labs
Delivered Via Discord

Using Discord for
Collaboration
during Lecture

Students Join
Their Team Channel

Office Hours
using Discord

Using Team Channel for
midterm & final projects

Discord
Platform

Outcomes from the study:

- The course instructor observed a considerable retention when using Discord platform compared to using Canvas teams or Slack.
- Discord platform connected the teaching team (instructor and TAs) to the students during and outside the classroom.
- Discord platform features resolved all first-to-see issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The students are having a unified platform to use for collaboration which is monitored by the course instructor. The students always contribute to their team and on a regular basis when they have any team assignment.